

RURAL DISTRICT OF CASTLE WARD,
NORTHUMBERLAND.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer
of Health.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

In presenting to you my Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary condition of your district, I shall endeavour, for uniformity, to follow the order of former years.

The estimated population to the middle of June, 1896, is 9574·375.

Area of the district in acres, 85·219.

114 deaths were registered during the year, giving a death-rate of 11·9 per 1,000 per annum.

248 births were registered during the same period, giving a birth-rate of 25·5 per 1,000 per annum.

Natural increase of the population, 134. Of the deaths 26 were under five years of age and 38 were over 65 years of age. Four were recorded from the seven principal zymotic diseases, and, calculated on the same population, give a death-rate of ·04 per 1,000 per annum

Of the total number of deaths,

32 were registered during the 1st quarter.

24	do.	do.	2nd	do.
34	do.	do.	3rd	do.
24	do.	do.	4th	do.

I visited all cases of notifiable disease reported to me and gave the necessary instructions. Fumigation was afterwards superintended by one of your officials. Disinfection of clothing, bedding, etc., cannot be efficiently carried out without a disinfecter. The number of cases of infectious diseases reported to me during the years 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, and 1896 were respectively, 225, 70, 60, 43, and 43.

I will now refer to the infectious diseases coming under my notice, and the steps taken to limit the extension of such diseases.

SMALLPOX.—None.

WHOOPING COUGH has not been prevalent in the district to any extent, at no time as an epidemic requiring special precaution.

MEASLES, like Whooping Cough, is non-notifiable, and I have no reason to think that any cases occurred before October, when about half a dozen cases occurred at Dinnington Colliery, having extended there from the adjacent colliery village of Seaton Burn. One death occurred from Measles at Gosforth, which adjoins the latter place.

SCARLET FEVER.—22 cases have been notified to me against 33 the preceding year, and 42 the year immediately before. Of those 7 occurred in Heddon Parish, 5 in Stamfordham, 1 in Kirkwhelpington, 3 in Stannington, and 6 in Ponteland. Except in Stamfordham and Heddon, more than one case did not occur in the same house, and the houses attacked were those of farmers, farm labourers, or tradesmen, except in Dinnington Colliery village. The milk supply was invariably got at the adjoining farm.

The Stannington children had communication in one case directly, and in the other two indirectly with Morpeth, where Scarlet Fever prevailed at the time.

The cases occurring in Stamfordham were a continuation in the same family of those reported last year.

In Heddon the disease extended from the adjoining village of Wylam through attendance at school.

The Ponteland cases occurred chiefly in the colliery district, and were evidently sporadic, as the intervals between them were long and could not be traced to infection. In one case the fever only lasted one day, causing doubt as to its nature.

CRUOP AND TYPHUS FEVER.—No cases reported to me.

ENTERIC OR TYPHOID FEVER.—A serious outbreak of this disease occurred at Fawdon Square, a colliery village on the borders of your district. On the 31st December, 1895, a case each was reported to me by Drs. Hedley and Hunter. On making enquiries I was informed that Crozier, Hunter's case, was the first attacked, as he returned ill with abdominal pains, having drunk some impure water at work. Subsequent cases were reported to me on the 1st, 4th, 13th, 23rd, and 29th February, and the last on the 16th April. Seeing the condition of the houses and their surroundings, and the want of accommodation and air space, I wrote to your chairman urgently requesting that something be done for isolation. After consultation with the other councillors it was suggested that the colliery managers be requested to meet us at Fawdon, which was arranged for the following day, 7th February. Your officials and chairman having met the colliery officials, the various defects were pointed out to them, who promised to give them immediate attention. Three recently renovated houses were given to us for a temporary hospital, after which we proceeded to Newcastle-on-Tyne and bought the necessary furniture, and engaged a trained nurse, who had to be supplemented by a second nurse in a few days. The sick persons, their relations, and their medical attendants were glad to utilize the hospital, there being as many as five patients in at one time; the central house was occupied by the nurses. The County Medical Officer of Health visited the hospital and approved of the arrangements. On vacating the hospital the furniture and rooms were disinfected. The furniture is at present stored, with the permission of the Guardians, in the Workhouse Fever Hospital. The three houses where the fever originated were disinfected.

DIARRHŒA AND DYSENTERY.—No cases have been notified.

The district is free from infectious disease at present.

Reports made by me and the action taken on such reports:—

- March 11th. **MACKINNEY'S COTTAGE, EACHWICK.**—Slops thrown on the roadside, no sink; west wall of cottage damp. Sink and drain has been put in.
- May 27th. **DINNINGTON.**—Messrs. Urwin's, Simpson's, and Thompson's Farms. There is no water on those farms for domestic purposes. Your inspector has served notices on the owners.
- Jan. 15th. **WHALTON VILLAGE, NORTH SIDE** (Lord Decies' property.)—Seven houses. The ash pits and privies are too close to the houses, causing a nuisance. Your inspector is negotiating for their removal to another place.
- July 4th. **DALTON VILLAGE.**—The domestic water supply is at an unreasonable distance. Negotiations are being carried on with the agent. The sinks at this village being complained of, new sinks are being put in and the cesspools removed.

KENTON LOW ROW.—An application was made to the Magistrates for a closing order July 25th. for 17 cottages, which was granted. Two now are only occupied.

STAMFORDHAM PRESBYTERY is in a generally damp state owing to being only Sept. 22nd. occasionally occupied. Spouting at the rear is defective; no drainage to carry the rain water away, which partly finds its way into the cellar. Notices have been served on the trustees.

DINNINGTON COLLIERY.—Nuisances have been reported to you as being caused by Sept. 28th. piggeries, fowl houses, and ashpits. Notice was given to the occupiers to remove the same.

CALLERTON LANE END.—Two cottages here require privies, ashpit, and sink. The Oct. 14th. architect is busy with the plans.

ELAND HALL (Messrs. Wailes' and Stobert's houses.)—A plan will shortly be submitted Oct. 27th. to you to prevent sewage from those houses polluting the Carr Cut.

NESBITT (Messrs. Stobb's and Kobson's houses.)—Notice has been served to provide Nov. 8th. better drainage for both those houses.

THREE MILE BRIDGE DAIRY FARM.—I sent a report of the sanitary state of this place Dec. 31st. to Dr. H. E. Armstrong, Medical Officer of Health, Newcastle-on-Tyne, at his request.

FAWDON SQUARE was provided with new sewers two years ago; this year a settling tank has been constructed to prevent sewage polluting a stream.

The new sewer at the West Row has been lowered, and the old sewer which was left to carry away the rain water removed.

PONTELAND SEWERAGE.—One of the various plans for the purification of this sewage, which have oscillated between you and the Parish Council, has been adopted. You have further decided on asking for a sufficient loan to carry out the same.

STAMFORDHAM.—A committee of your authority, with your officials, having met at Stamfordham, you decided to approve Mr. Balfour's (C.E.) Competition Plan for the purification of the sewage here.

I visited the various centres of population in your district periodically, and other places requiring attention. Where making special inspections, I usually sought the assistance of your inspector.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

G. H. FITZGERALD, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.

February, 1897.

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